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REMEMBERING SCHOOL DAYS TRAUMA. THE DISCOURSE ON A TRAGEDY OF ADOLESCENCE AND THE MECHANISMS OF CREATING BAD MEMORIES IN SWEDISH AND JAPANESE CINEMATOGRAPIES

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INTRODUCTION

On the Japanese ground a child, from its early days, is perceived through the lenses of its future roles. The matter of a child care is being taken seriously, as a special training before the final performance – starting adult life¹. The child-rearing process, called in Japanese *shitsuke*, literally means ‘the act of putting into the body of a child the arts of living and good manners to create one grown-up person’². However, the descendant is not only a vessel in which a proud parent will put his efforts and material support but also, according to the traditional ideology, an element making the family complementary³. On the other hand, the popular Japanese saying states “Until seven, amongst the gods”⁴, what shows the unique status of the youngest children. Nowadays, at the age between six and seven, a child in Japan starts compulsory education, thus begins its social life and leaves the period of a symbolic divine protection⁵.

The implications of the transition process between two orders (divine and secular/social) are also visible in Japanese cinema – when the social life starts, there appear problems, fears and phobias connected to the sudden change of one’s everyday environment. Similar to Swedish cases mentioned below, the Japanese cinema offers numerous examples discussing the problem of difficult adolescence and bad memories of that period, influencing the future existence as an adult. It is worth underlining that the depictions of trauma appearing in Japanese post-war cinematography can be divided into two categories. Bad memories are shown as the results of the external

¹ Hendry, Joy. *Becoming Japanese. The world of the pre-school child*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986, pp. 1 – 10.

² Ibidem, p. 11.

³ Ibidem, p. 14.

⁴ Ibidem, p. 15.

⁵ Nemoto, Yasuhiro. *The Japanese Education System*. Parkland: Universal Publishers, 1999, p. 12.

events that disturbed the natural flow of time, for example warfare or the presence of sudden death in the close environment of a young character. The traumatic memories of a child in Japanese cinema often relate also to the affairs happening at school and the toxic relations between the members of a class, factions, or other school-related groups.

In Sweden, there is no bigger value than a child and its early days. Childhood is supposed to be a time of joy and growing up to fill a unique position in Swedish welfare society. Post-war Scandinavian model stands in complete opposition to the values from the first half of the 20th century. As the most iconic example might serve the autobiographical cinema of Ingmar Bergman. The most honored Swedish director had been diagnosing and curing himself from childhood traumas through movies. Bergman described his years of adolescence as “cycles of sin, confession, punishment, forgiveness and grace”⁶ what was connected to the strict upbringing provided by his father, a protestant pastor⁷. The beginnings of the modern Swedish welfare state and its values can be traced back to the 1950s. In the middle of last century, Sweden was a country with one of the lowest birth-rate ratios in Europe⁸. One of the first steps to change that tendency was implementing compulsory sex education in schools since the beginning of the education process⁹. School reform has begun after World War II¹⁰. One of the side effects of this new curricular activity was a change of life attitude, as protestant values have rapidly lost their impact on society. But the real change in attitude to children and adolescence is related with Torsten Husén, as his vision has become a synonym of what is now called a “Scandinavian model of education”. Husén had developed the idea of education based on equity, participation and welfare state, which might be described as “major socio-political attributes of the Nordic model”¹¹. Ari Antikainen describes progressiveness as another attribute, and understands it as “search for new, unprejudiced solutions”¹². Although several decades passed, the described ideas still stand as the main goals of Scandinavian, as well as Swedish, education system. One of the most conspicuous things on the official website of Sweden (sweden.se)¹³ is an accentuation of Husén’s ideas. The sentence “Gender-aware education is increasingly common, striving to provide children with

⁶ Michaels, Lloyd. *Ingmar Bergman's Persona*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 9.

⁷ Vermilye, Jerry. *Ingmar Bergman. His life and Films*. Jefferson: McFarland & Company Inc., 2002, p. 4.

⁸ Kulick, Don. “Four Hundred Thousand Swedish Perverts.” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 11/2. 2005, p. 211.

⁹ Kulick, Don. op. cit., p. 211.

¹⁰ Griffiths, Tony. *Skandynawia. Wojna z trollami. Historia, kultura, artyści od czasów Napoleona do Stiega Larssona* [Scandinavia. At war with trolls. A history from the Napoleonic era to the third Millennium]. Warszawa: AMF Plus Group, 2011, p. 211.

¹¹ Antikainen, Ari. “In search of the nordic model of education.” *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research* 50/3. 2006, p. 229.

¹² Ibidem.

¹³ “Education in Sweden.” *Sweden.se*. 21.07.2016. Web. 17 Feb 2017. <https://sweden.se/society/education-in-sweden/>.

the same opportunities in life, regardless of gender”¹⁴ is one of the first things a reader might see there. Equality and inclusiveness are the things that Swedish society tries to emphasize the most.

While looking at the post-war Swedish society and its culture, an intriguing paradox can be noticed. Despite one of the lowest crime ratio amongst kids in Europe and growing up so-called “generation of kids who’ve never been spanked”¹⁵, child abuse and traumas of adolescence are one of the main areas of filmmakers’ interests. Movies dealing with violence and child abuse are highly publicized and childhood is presented as a war zone where no rules apply. The titles about school days trauma can be divided into two main categories. The first one shows aggression against school-age children and their reactions, from violence to inaction, while the second one can be illustrated by a Swedish proverb which says “childhood memories last long”. According to this, the filmmakers show long-term effects of school days trauma by depicting the adults who do not cope with society because of the memories they possess.

The main purpose of this article is to analyze and compare the depictions of the mechanisms of creating bad memories during the school days in Swedish and Japanese cinematographies. While searching for the common narrative patterns, as well as emphasizing the differences between both countries, this essay aims to present two film research areas – contrasting, yet in many aspects surprisingly similar.

BYE BYE INNOCENCE. WAR, TRANSGRESSION AND TRAUMATIC MEMORIES IN JAPANESE NARRATIVES

Before the World War II the depictions of children in the Japanese cinema revolved around the happiness and sadness of everyday life. The plethora of pictures showing the child protagonists, their relationships with other youngsters and the influence the “adult world” had on their existence, resulted in the emergence of a new genre – *jidō-eiga* (“juvenile film”)¹⁶. As Keiko McDonald observes, in the 1930s “the search for marketable forms of innocence was on,”¹⁷ which started the “golden age of films about children” lasting from 1937 to 1941¹⁸. Here should be mentioned Hiroshi Shimizu (1903–1966) who devoted a great part of his filmography to portraying the bucolic land of childhood times. His most appreciated films¹⁹, *Children in the Wind* (*Kaze no naka no kodomotachi*, 1937) and *Four Seasons of Children* (*Kodomo no shiki*, 1939)

¹⁴ Ibidem.

¹⁵ Gumbrecht, Jamie. “In Sweden, a generation of kids who’ve never been spanked.” *cnn.com*. N.p. 2011. Web. 17 Feb 2017. <http://edition.cnn.com/2011/11/09/world/sweden-punishment-ban/>.

¹⁶ Loska, Krzysztof. *Poetyka filmu japońskiego* [*The Poetics of the Japanese Film*]. Kraków: Rabid, 2009, pp. 156 – 161.

¹⁷ McDonald, Keiko. *From Book to Screen: Modern Japanese Literature in Films*. New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2000, p. 31.

¹⁸ Ibidem.

¹⁹ Ibidem. *Children in the Wind* received the 4th rank among the ten best pictures of 1937 chosen by “Kinema jumpo” journal.

presented the stories of two brothers – Zenta and Sanpei²⁰. What is significant, even though the existing order of children's lives was disturbed²¹ and boys needed to adopt the bitter lesson about the significance of money in adults' world, they were still able to enjoy simple pleasures²². The protagonists quickly forget about the temporary misfortunes, and the mentioned pictures provided the happy endings, leaving no space for despair, as well as underlining that unpleasant memories of the events will soon be forgotten. It should be emphasized that the *jidō-eiga* films were considered comedy productions, what left no space for narrations about school age traumas or transgressions resulting in creating bad memories. The optimistic narratives about the childhood in the bosom of nature also appeared after 1990, for example in Yōichi Higashi's film *Village of Dreams* (*Eno Nakano bokuno mura*, 1996).

However, the traumatic events of the World War II changed the perception of a child in Japanese cinema. The films as *Village...* still can be found among the narrations about children's trauma and lost childhood, but there is a scent of nostalgia for the pre-war past visible in the later productions. Nevertheless, the child figure in Japanese post-war cinema came to represent the discourse of the lost innocence that was taken by the inevitability of the history. The narratives appearing from the early post-war period, such as *Twenty-Four Eyes* (*Nijushi no hitomi*, 1954) by Keisuke Kinoshita, emphasize the fact that the traumatic memories of the War might postpone, or even constrain, children's progress to adulthood²³. Kinoshita's film – an adaptation of Sakae Tsuboi's novel (1952)²⁴, follows the pre- and post-war career of a teacher Hisako Ōishi and the fate of her students. Even though the brilliant educator tries to teach her pupils universal virtues and raise self-conscious citizens, the menace of trauma will chase them long after the tragic events. The figure of a teacher reuniting with her alumni after the War also appears in Kaneto Shindō's picture *Children of Hiroshima* (*Genbaku no ko*, 1952). Based on the collected memories of the primary school students, later on composed into the narrative scenario, the film emphasizes the fact that it is impossible to forget about the trauma²⁵. The children who survived are reminded of the dead members of their families, not only by the obvious signs of the newly-built environment but also by the living ones, expecting the new generation to cultivate the memories. It can be observed that the post-war cinema provides the picture of the young people caught in the trap of requiring recollections of the past what generates additional trauma and deprives them of the innocence. On the other hand, as a significant example of the film illustrating the process of fighting with the trauma and the strive to be able to continue a normal life after the War, can

²⁰ Loska, Krzysztof, op. cit.

²¹ In *Children in the Wind* boys' father is accused of fraud what forces the mother to search for a job, while in *Four Seasons of Children* the vicious antagonist tries to take control over the factory that belongs to children's grandfather.

²² Ibidem, pp. 159 – 161.

²³ Lury, Karen. *The Child in Film: Tears, Fears and Fairy Tales*. London: I. B. Tauris, 2010, p. 26.

²⁴ See: Tsuboi, Sakae. *Twenty-Four Eyes*. Tokyo: Tuttle Publishing, 2007.

²⁵ Loska, Krzysztof, op. cit., pp. 354 – 357.

be mentioned animated *Grave of the Fireflies* (*Hotaru no haka*, 1988)²⁶ directed by Isao Takahata. In Studio Ghibli's picture young Seita tries to survive the constant bombings, hunger and terror while taking care of his little sister Setsuko. What is significant, the protagonist does his best to pretend the normal life in front of a girl to save her from the trauma and bad memories²⁷.

Except for the war trauma, another factor that creates bad memories and irreversibly alters the perception of a child, displayed in Japanese cinema, is connected with the direct experience of death. The birth of a "traumatic identity" of a young person appears, among others, in *Eureka* (*Yurika*, 2000) and *Sad Vacation* (2007) by Shinji Aoyama, *Let me escape* (*Shissō*, 2005) by Sabu or *Confessions* (*Kokuhaku*, 2010) directed by Tetsuya Nakashima²⁸. In all mentioned titles the protagonists witnessed or survived the liminal experience that changed their perception of the everyday life and made them unable to continue the regular relationships with the others (families, friends or teachers). Moreover, the constant reappearance of traumatic memories forces young people to undertake the violent actions and relieve their stress by transgressing the social norms.

The recurring topic in Japanese cinema, related to the school environment, is connected to the problem of aggression between the students that creates bad memories or is a result of an inability to cope. It should be underlined that, as in *Confessions*, the school premises often become the setting of the most traumatic events. Displaying the problem of school bullying (*ijime*)²⁹, widely discussed in Japanese agenda, the directors show that the school environment makes a perfect place for all kinds of transgressive behavior. The victims of school violence, as well as aggressors, create their own world of cruelty that dominates their existence and, eventually, leads to the tragedy impossible to forget in adult life. Among the films³⁰ covering the topic of the identity crisis and searching for the acceptance of others by the young protagonists through pestering the weaker ones, it is worth mentioning the most extreme pictures, presenting the pathologies of the sadomasochistic relations between the students. In *Moonlight Whispers* (*Gekkō no sasayaki*, 1999) the viewer observes the gradual discarding of Takuya's personality. He is in love with Satsuki, the girl who takes pleasure from putting him down and inventing more and more creative tortures. Similar narrative situations are presented in various Japanese sexploitation films, as *The Torture Club* (*Chotto Kawaii Aian Meiden*, 2014), in which innocent Yuzuki (Noriko Kijima) becomes a member of an exclusive BDSM club for school lesbians.

²⁶ In 2005 Tōya Satō directed a live-action TV remake of the Studio Ghibli's film and in 2008 another remake was created by Taro Hyūgaji.

²⁷ More about the film, see: Cavallaro, Dani. *The Anime Art of Hayao Miyazaki*. Jefferson: McFarland, 2006, pp. 77 – 80.

²⁸ Loska, Krzysztof. *Nowy film japoński [New Japanese Film]*. Kraków: Universitas, 2013, pp. 321 – 330.

²⁹ More about bullying in Japan, see: Morita, Yohji. "Japan." *The Nature of School Bullying: A Cross-National Perspective*. Ed. Catalano Richard, Morita Yohji et. al. London: Routledge, 2014. pp. 309 – 323.

³⁰ Here *A Blue Bird* (*Aoi tori*, 2008) by Kenji Nakanishi and *Blue Spring* (*Aoi haru*, 2001) by Toshiaki Toyoda should be mentioned.

Furthermore, it is worth analyzing the motifs of creating their own rules of existence by the child protagonists in Japanese films. The observer can perceive that the revolutionary groups of wild youths, destroying the social order at school or in other occupied space, come out against the law stated by adults. This situation can be spotted in films as *Suicide Club* (*Jisatsu sākuru*, 2001) by Sion Sono or infamous *Emperor Tomato Ketchup* (*Tomato Kecchappu Kōtei*, 1971) directed by Shūji Terayama. In the first picture the director underlines the alienation of the young generation and the feeling of being misunderstood by adults, what results in creating the shocking way of the manifestation of rejection of the societal order. However, thirty years earlier Terayama, in his avant-garde visual collage, showed that the cruelty of the children, hunting adults to wipe out all memories of the old order, brings only disappointment³¹. The children are not able to replace the adults' rules, as their initial plans lack the experience necessary to create a new world on the ruins of what they destroyed.

The tragedy of adolescence presented in Japanese cinema revolves around the problem of erasing the recollections of the trauma. However, it can also be observed that the Japanese filmmakers emphasize the influence of the external factors on the mechanisms of creating bad memories. A child, even a member of a gang or one of distorted personality, is always a victim of the unfortunate coincidence and its deeds are partly excused.

FROM SWEDEN WITH LOVE? CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION AND ITS INFLUENCE ON ADOLESCENCE

School days trauma is one of the most discussed subjects in Sweden and adolescence's problems were important to Swedish filmmakers even before the education reform. One of the earliest pictures focused on young people was *Torment* (*Hets*, 1944) by Alf Sjöberg. The film, based on early Ingmar Bergman's screenplay, presented the story of a young boy who fell in love and, meanwhile, was oppressed by his teacher. It was one of the very first movies criticizing the strict Swedish school system³². The first love and adults standing against young lovers' feelings were a repetitive image in the years after World War II and had become a sort of cliché, which soon changed into, misunderstood and trivialized by western Europe and United States, concept of Swedish Sin³³. In 1950s Swedish filmmakers, who tried to speak about coming-of-age issues, were focused on stories of miserable love. Here can be mentioned *She danced one Summer* (*Hon dansade en sommar*, 1952) by Arne Mattson and *Summer with Monica* (*Sommaren med Monika*, 1953) directed by Ingmar Bergman. These movies present an idealized portrait of a feeling between adolescent couples who fell

³¹ Loska, Krzysztof. *Nowy film...* op. cit., pp. 60 – 61.

³² Sundholm, John. Thorsen, Isak. Andersson, Lars G. et al. *Historical Dictionary of Scandinavian Cinema*. Plymouth: Scarecrow Press, 2012. p. 130.

³³ Arnberg, Klara. Marklund, Carl. "Illegally Blonde. Swedish Sin and Pornography in U.S. and Swedish Imaginations 1955–1971." *Swedish Cinema and the Sexual Revolution*. Ed. Elisabet Björklund and Mariah Larsson. Jefferson: McFarland & Company, 2016 pp. 188 – 189.

in love against the will of their relatives³⁴. Even though requited love dominated over unrequited one, the main source of trauma were the adults trying to split up the affectionate couples. A feeling of shame, which was the primary fear of adults, was connected with potential loss of virginity and disgrace brought to the family name. Despite the fact that in the 1950s Sweden outthought the rest of Europe and United States in matters of cultural liberalization, premarital intercourse was still socially condemned at that time. One of the most fundamental differences in portrayal of love as a source of potential trauma is the age of sexual initiation. Aforementioned titles tell the stories about young couples who are almost in their twenties. When they will be compared to the films made after rapid liberalization, which took place on the cusp of the 1960s and 1970s, it can be observed that the initiation age dropped to approximately 14 years old. These statistics find their confirmation in Roy Andersson's movie *A Swedish Love Story* (*En kärlekshistoria*, 1970) that has cast the actors who were 15 and 16 years old at that time.

The echoes of Andersson's movie resonate in *Show me love* (*Fucking Åmål*, 1998) directed by Lukas Moodysson. While depicting the teenage love in rural areas, Moodysson scratches the portrait of a "New Sweden", where equity is the most important value. Despite its provocative title for a domestic market, the picture might be considered an educational movie and a lesson of tolerance for Swedish teenagers. Moodysson tells the story of 14 years old Agnes who is in love with Elin, an object³⁵ of everyone's dreams and her complete opposition. One of the biggest fears of Elin is related to marital problems and getting stuck in Åmål³⁶. Moreover, she is aware that her value for the school colleagues is related to her beauty, so that she treats her appearance as a curse because she attracts boys only interested in sexual intercourses. Moodysson also criticizes stereotypical, narrow-minded way of thinking. For example, in one of the scenes the viewer can observe a quarrel between Elin and the boys. The leader of the group claims that there are things that girls would not understand, like texting from a mobile phone. He also tries to defend himself by adding that the boys cannot do "activities for the girls", "because they do not know how to use a lipstick or put on make-up". When Elin asks her boyfriend to stand by her side, he says nothing because he does not want to stand against his best friend even when he claims chauvinistic opinions. Masculine superiority in small Åmål is a source of the biggest frustrations for Elin. In one of the most important scenes she screams "Varför måste vi bo i fucking jävla kuk-Åmål", which might be translated as "Why do we have to live in fucking cock Åmål?", suggesting the dominant position of the men around. Sven Hansell emphasizes that small cities in Swedish cinema represent strong heteronormativity values³⁷. Discovery and acceptance of her lesbianism results from bad

³⁴ Sundholm, John. Thorsen, Isak. Andersson, Lars G. et al. *Historical Dictionary...* op. cit. p. 130.

³⁵ The word "object" is substantial to understand educational purport of Moodysson's debut.

³⁶ Björklund, Jenny. "Queering the Small Town: Lukas Moodysson's Film Show Me Love." *Women's Studies: An inter-disciplinary journal*. 39/1. 2009. p. 47.

³⁷ Hansell, Sven. "Du är inte normal! Kön, norm och frihet i Lukas Moodyssons filmer." *Kvinnovetenskaplig tidskrift* 1/2. 2004. p. 103.

memories with ex-boyfriends who were not able to treat Elin as a valuable person. The girl becomes a symbol of manifestation against male domination.

Problems of adolescence in Swedish cinema are not only limited to threats of love. Much more often childhood trauma is related to hate and violence. *Popular Music* (*Populärmusik från Vittula*, 2004), directed by Reza Bagher, tells the story of two boys growing up in the Far North. Just like the characters in Moodysson's film, they dream about leaving their hometown. Set back in the 1960s, the movie shows baby steps of multiculturalism in rural Sweden. In a small town on the Swedish-Finnish border, there live different nationalities representing distinct cultures and religions, what leads to the main point of Bagher's picture – excessive religiosity. According to Sofia Sjö, religion “becomes a hindrance from which one has to break free to find happiness”³⁸. The members of one of the families are part of Laestadian movement, which might be briefly described as a strict fraction of the Lutheran Church³⁹. The father, whose devotion has marks of a cult, beats his sons hard when they do “sinful things”, as listening to music or wearing inappropriate clothes. In Bagher's film religiousness is strongly criticized and pictured as a “downright evil”⁴⁰. The father of Laestadian family is described as “the worst type – Laestadian without God”, Niila, one of the boys, is capable of surviving the struggles of adolescence thanks to rock music, his passion⁴¹. Swedish filmmakers present a child not only as a victim, but as an offender as well. There are numerous examples in Swedish cinematography of adolescence that might be described as a war zone. Among well-known examples, like the story about bullied boy and his vampire friend – *Let the right one in* (*Låt den rätte komma in*, 2008) by Thomas Alfredson or a metaphor of a totalitarian system – *Evil* (*Ondskan*, 2003) directed by Mikael Håfström, the most controversial example was *Play* (2011) by Ruben Östlund. All aforementioned titles depicted children not only as victims of bullying but as perpetrators as well, but Östlund went further. In the film from 2011 the roles of the offenders were played by black children, what caused a debate about multiculturalism in Sweden⁴². In Östlund's *Play* the viewer can see how living in ghettos affects children, being a contradiction of main assumptions of multicultural policy. Swedish director points out how hopeless are Swedes nowadays in helping out adolescent victims, when there appears a chance that intervention might be seen as racist behavior. At the beginning of the film viewer can observe desolated commercial culture where black pupils meet up and intensively talk with each other. They are choosing potential victims, but they are completely ignored by everyone in that area. That ignorance lasts also when they start to stalk

³⁸ Sjö, Sofia. Danielsson Árni S. “Detraditionalization, diversity, and mediatization: Explorations of religion in Nordic Films.” *Nordic Journal of Religion and Society* 26/1. 2013. p. 51.

³⁹ Sjö, Sofia. “Bad religion/good spirituality? Explorations of religion in contemporary Scandinavian films.” *Journal of Scandinavian Cinema* 2/1. 2012. p. 38.

⁴⁰ Sjö, Sofia. Danielsson Árni S. “Detraditionalization...”, op. cit., p. 51.

⁴¹ Sjö, Sofia. “Bad religion...”, op. cit., p. 38.

⁴² Karlsson, Helena. “Ruben Östlund's *Play* (2011): Race and segregation in ‘good’ liberal Sweden.” *Journal of Scandinavian Cinema* 4/1. 2014. p. 44.

another kid or start to hook people coming back from shopping. Östlund suggests that they occupy marginal position in the Swedish society, which ignores them even when they start violating the law⁴³. By the acts of violence they try to compensate marginalization, searching for the situations providing the feeling of omnipotence⁴⁴. Director draws a straw theory which suggest that childhood memories, related to feeling of ignorance, will result in an emergence of a lost generation.

It is worth mentioning that Swedish filmmakers underline long-term effects of memories related to school days trauma, as it was visible on the examples from Japanese cinema. Among noteworthy movies appears, based on Susanna Alakoski's book, *Beyond (Svinalängorna, 2010)*, directed by Pernilla August. The Swedish director tells the story of Leena whose memoirs come back when she receives a phone call from the hospital where her critically ill mother stays. Leena's family moved from Finland to Sweden in searching for a better life. They stayed in a public housing project called by Swedes "Swine Projects" because of seediness⁴⁵. In Leena's home alcohol and domestic violence were a norm. When she became an adult, she has decided to erase her contacts with pathological parents. Even a phone call can not change her attitude to dying mother, rather reminding her of all traumas which she had been muffling. Bad memories affect her daily routines and soon became a problem in her marital life. Anna Odell in her debut *The Reunion (Återträffen, 2013)* deals with memories in a different way. Inspired by director's private experiences, the film portrays a middle-aged woman who decides to dissect with opponents bullying her in adolescence. Odell presents that victim's perspective and perception of the same situations is completely different than former aggressors.

CONCLUSION

In both Japanese and Swedish cinematographies the viewer can encounter the films which refer to idyllic images of adolescence despite its problems. This pastoral image seems to be more characteristic to Swedish movies from the time where term "Swedish sin" was not fully developed and vulgarized by western culture, and pre-war Japanese cinema. Although echoes of idealization of childhood memories reappear in Higashi's *Village of Dreams* and Swedish *Popular Music*, the traumatic events of the World War II for the Japanese nation and cultural liberalization since the 1950s in Sweden resulted in new ways of presenting children's characters.

One of the crucial events in Japanese history was the World War II and traumatic memories related to warfare, as well as the national tragedy of atomic bombing. The recent history of Sweden is free from any sort of war conflicts, happening on the Swedish land. As this Scandinavian country has recently celebrated two hundred

⁴³ Ibidem. p. 50.

⁴⁴ Doxtater, Amanda. "From Diversity to Precarity." *New Dimensions of Diversity in Nordic Culture and Society*. Ed. Jenny Björklund and Ursula Lindqvist, 2011. p. 205.

⁴⁵ Määttä, Simo K. "Authenticity, Boundaries, and Hybridity: Translating Migrant and Minority Literature from Swedish into Finnish." *Literary Linguistics International Journal* 5/3. 2016. p. 2.

years of constant peace, there are no traces of children's war trauma in its cinematography. However, it can be stated that *Evil* from 2003 is considered by Swedes to be one of the most important allegories of totalitarianism. Håfström, by showing troubled kids who attend the approved school run by sadistic teachers, depicts a caste system where the social position is strictly correlated with lineage.

The most surprising difference between compared cinematographies might be the portrait of a child as an offender. In Japanese cinema child is always innocent or its aggressive behavior is the fault of a system, designed not perfectly enough to prevent the distorted ones from having a bad influence on others. Nevertheless, bullying in Swedish cinema seems to be more reasonless. For example, the viewer is not informed why the protagonist in *Let the right one in* is beaten almost every day in school. Aforementioned in this paper *Play* (2011) is an exception to this rule. That ambiguity is explained by the fact that adolescent offenders in Östlund's film represent the minority. However, the topic of racism in Swedish, as well as in Japanese cinema would deserve more attention and further research.

The discourse of the mechanisms of creating bad memories, related to the school days and possible traumas of that time, has its reflection in Japan and Swedish cinematographies. Even though many differences are caused by a geographical distance between these culturally different countries, we can observe how some of the cultural factors repeat on the film ground. The filmmakers from both countries are equally interested in depicting long-term effects of school days trauma and invite the viewer to elaborate on the phenomenon. In Japanese and Swedish films respectively, the observer can perceive how hard it is to defeat inner demons and try to run a normal life in societies that strictly define the role of a child, as well as its place in a societal order.

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SUMMARY

The presented article analyzes and compares the depictions of the mechanisms of creating bad memories during the school days in Swedish and Japanese cinematographies. The authors represent two film research areas what allows to present a wide variety of film examples, search for the common narrative patterns visible in the chosen pictures from two cultures, and emphasize the differences between both countries. The analysis starts from the brief presentation of the cultural implications connected with the strictly stated role of a child in Japan and Sweden, what has its reflection in both cinematographies. Furthermore, the authors underline the changes in the societies that are visible in the films, follow the most common patterns, and discuss the reasons and results of the school days trauma.